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# Security Council

Seventy-first year

*Provisional*

**7624**th meeting
Wednesday, 17 February 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Ramírez Carreño | (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) |
| *Members*: | Angola | Mr. Gaspar Martins |
| | China | Mr. Xu Zhongsheng |
| | Egypt | Mr. Iwad |
| | France | Mr. Stehelin |
| | Japan | Mr. Okamura |
| | Malaysia | Mr. Ibrahim |
| | New Zealand | Mr. Taula |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Senegal | Mr. Seck |
| | Spain | Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Yelchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Wilson |
| | United States of America | Mr. Pressman |
| | Uruguay | Mr. Rosselli |

## Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Guinea-Bissau**

**Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Brazil.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/141, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Trovoada.

**Mr. Trovoada** (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to present to the Security Council the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141).

Since the publication of the report, the situation in Guinea-Bissau has continued to be characterized by ongoing differences within the political class. Those differences were in evidence during the vote on the Government's programme on 23 December 2015, during which 15 members of the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) abstained, despite instructions from the party. In response, the PAIGC decided to expel them and called for their replacement in the National Assembly. To that end, the Permanent Commission met on 15 January 2016 and declared the revocation of the terms of office the 15 members.

Today, these political differences, which had been confined to Parliament, have unleashed a true political and legal imbroglio. The Speaker of the National Assembly, on the one hand, and 3 of the 15 expelled members, on the other, have separately petitioned the Regional Court of Bissau to adjudicate the decision of the Permanent Commission to revoke the mandates of the aforementioned members of Parliament. On 8 February, the Court issued an interim order invalidating the suspension of the mandate revocation, contrary to its original decision, which ordered those same members to comply with the decision of the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly.

In that context, on 1 February the President of the Republic took the initiative of bringing together the different parties to the conflict to seek, through dialogue, a consensus outcome to the current political impasse in Parliament. He decided to invite to the presidential palace the Speaker of the National Assembly and representatives of the PAIGC, the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), the 15 Assembly members whose mandates had been revoked, and representatives of civil society for meetings that took place in the presence of representatives of the group of five international partners of Guinea-Bissau: the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union and the United Nations. President Vaz shared the correspondence he had received concerning the current crisis, including that in which he had been asked to use his judicial influence to resolve the crisis. Each party presented its position and its underlying political and legal arguments.

On 2 February, the President convened a second meeting at which the parties reiterated their respective positions. On the one hand, the National Assembly and the PAIGC maintained that the members had been excluded legally; on the other, the 15 expelled members were supported by the PRS, which considered their exclusion to be illegal. Following the second round of discussions, on 4 February the leader of the PAIGC sent a letter to the President of the Republic, requesting that the format of the meetings be modified and arguing that

the dialogue should be conducted among institutions rather than individuals.

Consequently, neither the National Assembly nor the PAIGC have participated in subsequent meetings, including that of 10 February, which took place in the presence of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Special Envoy of the President of Nigeria, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. Hernâni Coelho, who holds the rotating presidency of the CPLP, accompanied by Mr. Murade Murargy, Executive Secretary of that organization, in addition to representatives of the group of five international partners.

In the meantime, I went to Senegal and Guinea from 3 to 8 February to talk with the leaders of those two neighbouring States about recent political developments in Guinea-Bissau. During our meeting, President Macky Sall, Acting Chair of ECOWAS, expressed his concern about the current political stalemate and assured me that ECOWAS would continue to support the stabilization process in Guinea-Bissau. He stressed, however, the importance for the subregional organization of receiving financial assistance to maintain its military mission, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, beyond 30 June. President Alpha Condé, who is also ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, shared with me the same concerns as his Senegalese counterpart.

The more the institutions of the State and the principal political players are divided, the more the ongoing political situation will gain in complexity, thereby delaying the implementation of essential reforms. As the national stakeholders attempt to resolve their differences, and following the recent contradictory decisions of the Regional Court of Bissau, I again urgently appeal to them to attach all due importance and priority to frank and sincere dialogue, in strict compliance with the Constitution and the law. Any other formula outside these parameters will only perpetuate the cycle of political instability that has so long prevailed in the country.

Moreover, if it were to persist, this institutional stalemate would damage the people's chances of enjoying basic social services such as health care and education, condemning them to continue to pay the price for the failure of their political elite to keep their promises for a future better. I take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau on the role constructive they have played during this period difficult by demonstrating restraint and outstanding civic spirit.

I therefore reiterate my appeal to the political leaders to put the national interest above all individual or group considerations. It is time for these leaders to focus on seeking sustainable solutions instead of indulging in mutual accusations that do nothing to settle the crisis. For its part, the international community has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to help Guinea-Bissau to continue along the path of development and peace. I encourage it to pursue its activites on behalf of the country in an even more concerted and coordinated manner.

If the institutions of the Republic and key stakeholders were to agree on a road map or a stability pact, that could be a starting point for establishing conditions conducive to institutional stability, at least until the end of current legislature. This prerequisite is fundamental to the implementation of the "Terra Ranka" development programme, which was endorsed by international partners at the round table of Brussels, in March 2015, and enjoys significant approval among the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I therefore urge all stakeholders, especially the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and the political parties, to stick to the path of dialogue and to consider the possibility of adopting a stability pact in the interests of the nation. As the Secretary-General indicates in his latest report on Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations stands ready to support any initiative to strengthen stability in that country, provided that its leaders demonstrate the political will to commit themselves to that end.

Despite the progress made in strengthening domestic security, I remain concerned about the increase in organized crime in the country, due to the current crisis and the concommitent weakening of State institutions. The recent acts of armed robbery at the home of a member of the Government and the residence of a United Nations international staff member illustrate the deterioration of the environment security in Guinea-Bissau.

As members can see, the political situation in the country is worrisome, and maintaining United Nations commitment remains essential. I therefore reiterate the Secretary-General's request that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated

Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, which expires on 29 February, in order to allow the mission to maintain its activities and programmes to consolidate peace and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Trovoada for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. De Aguiar Patriota.

**Mr. De Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil): Let me start by thanking you, Sir, for inviting me today and giving me the opportunity to address the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in the presence of Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), whose timely briefing is welcome and useful to the future deliberations and decisions of this Council.

The current political impasse in Guinea-Bissau is riddled with institutional challenges that continue to affect the lives of Bissau-Guineans while preventing them from reaping the fruits of progress and a better life. Since the last time I briefed the Council, on 28 August 2015 (see S/PV.7514, p. 3), the Peacebuilding Commission has remained actively engaged with the relevant stakeholders. We have issued three statements expressing support for finding a lasting solution to the crisis while signalling the responsibility of the political actors to swiftly step up their efforts to enable the country to move forward with its peacebuilding agenda.

I have personally engaged with a large number of key stakeholders, including the Department of Political Affairs in the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the leadership of UNIOGBIS and countries in the region. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Trovoada's ongoing efforts to exercise his good offices and to welcome the recent visit by Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Special Envoy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and representatives of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. We greatly value their cooperation with the PBC in working to link the peacebuilding agenda for Guinea-Bissau to the country's long-term priorities.

With regard to the situation unfolding before us, the PBC believes that the political class's failure to reach the consensus on decisive issues that could put Guinea-Bissau back on the path to stability has generated an unfortunate and prolonged period of uncertainty. It is equally disappointing and regrettable considering that the lack of conditions for stability in the country has forced international partners to delay the disbursement of the considerable financial resources pledged last March in Brussels at a donor conference for funding the national peacebuilding programme. It is disheartening that the momentum gained last year in the wake of the donor conference is losing steam, and the fact that disbursement has taken so long may only worsen the current situation in Guinea-Bissau.

However, amid the political turbulence, we continue to see reassuring signs, such as the fact that the divisions among politicians have not translated into violence in the streets or regions of the country. We would also like to highlight the stance of the armed forces and the independence of the justice system, both of which have been respecting and upholding the constitutional order, as well as the role of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in defusing potential flare-ups of violence during the tense times the country has been dealing with. In that regard, the PBC believes it is crucial that the Security Council endorse the continuation of the ECOWAS Mission beyond its mandate's expiration in June. I urge Council members and other countries to provide the political and financial support necessary for ECOMIB's extension. Our support for the people of Guinea-Bissau should emphasize these signs, as well as empowering civil society actors, especially women and young people, who are among those continuing to demand that their elected representatives be sensitive to their grievances and show civic responsibility.

The PBC is committed to working with the Council to support and strengthen the role of the United Nations and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS, along with the mission's continued presence in Guinea-Bissau. Today more than ever, it is crucial to ensure a solid and effective United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau that coordinates and promotes the international community's efforts to assist the country and its authorities and people. We also encourage the efforts of regional actors such as the African Union and ECOWAS, which have been coherently articulating the urgent need to overcome the current impasse. Our joint efforts should continue to aim at preventing the political crisis from undermining the progress achieved so far.

Because the solutions to Guinea-Bissau's endemic problems must be initiated and carried out by the Bissau-Guineans themselves, the importance of national leadership and ownership as catalysts for political change cannot be overemphasized. Political will and constructive and consensual dialogue, coupled with courageous leadership, such as we know Bissau-Guineans are capable of, are needed more than ever, and should be transformed into a powerful force that can outweigh the actions of spoilers.

The seeds of economic and social growth have been sown in Guinea-Bissau by the Bissau-Guineans through their adoption of a long-term vision for peacebuilding and institutional reform. Their motivation is clear — to leave behind the dark days of widespread poverty and political instability. The popular cry in favour of a sovereign choice to return to democracy must not be ignored or silenced. It should be upheld, and we are therefore called on to act with determination. The international community has the important task of helping to make that vision become a reality. To achieve it, we must be coherent and consistent in our messages and deeds. It is therefore incumbent on the international partners to work together and remain engaged long after the end of the current crisis.

The difficulties in improving governance in Guinea-Bissau should not prevent the country from moving forward on key development opportunities. The PBC believes it is important to deliver consistent messages to the national authorities and stakeholders in which the emphasis is on confidence-building and on realizing the magnitude of the opportunity to move forward with reforms. The PBC would encourage the holding of a meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau as an opportunity to deepen the dialogue and cooperation between the international community and the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to conclude by saying that the PBC considers it extremely important to develop and nurture its cooperation and relationship with the Council. We value the complementarity that the PBC and the Security Council can bring to addressing politically charged situations. In the specific context of Guinea-Bissau, we see an opportunity to apply joint positive leverage to find a solution to the current impasse and work towards an outcome that will benefit a country in dire need.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador De Patriota for his informative briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

**Mrs. Pinto Lopes D'Alva** (Guinea-Bissau): We would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your accession to the presidency of the Council for the month of February, and to wish you success in your work.

I would especially like to thank the Secretary-General for the report on Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141) that has just been presented and for his personal engagement with the latest developments in my country. We very much appreciate and commend the work of his Special Representative, Mr. Miguel Trovoada, and his team. I would also like to thank Ambassadors Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil; Sofia Mesquita Borges, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste; and Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, the Chairs, respectively, of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for their statements and engagement on Guinea-Bissau.

Today's meeting of the Council is taking place at the time when Guinea-Bissau is facing a serious political crisis that is compromising the normal functioning of State institutions and jeopardizing all the gains achieved after the general elections of 2014, including the very encouraging results of the Brussels round-table donor conference. As we can see, the instability in Guinea-Bissau has not ended with its elections, and the situation the country is currently facing clearly illustrates that. That is why we are appealing to the international community to remain engaged with us in helping to strengthen our institutions and work much more closely with the national authorities and all political stakeholders in order to guide us, through open and frank dialogue, so as to mitigate the crisis situation that is endangering our peace and stability.

Despite of the tensions that exist within the Republic's major institutions and the country's main political parties, Bissau-Guineans throughout the country continue to behave relatively peacefully and calmly even as their socioeconomic well-being is being severely affected and their dreams and aspirations are once again on hold. We know that it is our primary responsibility to bring peace and stability to our country in order to achieve economic development and prosperity for all. But the long-suffering population does not deserve to pay a high price for the difficulties

encountered along the hard road to peace in Guinea-Bissau. They are counting on the international community to remain engaged and to not abandon Guinea-Bissau.

For Guinea-Bissau, the path to democracy has not been easy to traverse. However, we believe that the latest crisis, although more complicated in some ways and costly to our people, is bringing us much closer to the stable democracy we seek. The fact that all the parties involved in the current political crisis have been undertaking legal steps to resolve their differences through the national courts is to be highlighted and commended. We can say that these little democratic achievements are in part the result of a series of institutional reforms initiated by the Government. Notwithstanding all the reforms on its agenda, including public administration and justice, security sector reform still is one of the priorities for the Government, which is very engaged through the Ministry of Defence and its security sector reform steering committee, established for better follow-up and proper implementation of this important reform. In that vein, it is crucial that partners fulfil their commitment to Guinea-Bissau with regard to the reform process by providing their financial support to the pension fund for the demobilization of military and police officers, as well as by contributing financially to the special fund for retired former freedom fighters.

The position of the military during the latest crisis is to be commended, and the best way to ensure this attitude prevails is to complete the security sector reform to guarantee a smooth demobilization process and dignified retirement or return to civilian life. We are convinced that, with the effective implementation of all reforms in the country, Guinea-Bissau will be able to really achieve the needed peace and stability, which consequently would help to create an enabling environment to attract foreign and domestic investment, create jobs for youth, reinforce women's empowerment through more opportunities for decent jobs, and reduce poverty, leading to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for our people.

Allow me to commend before the Council the fact that, despite the current political situation in Guinea-Bissau, last week the Republic of Timor-Leste disbursed $250,000 for the national dialogue and reconciliation process, as part of their pledge at the Brussels round table conference last year. The gesture of honouring the commitment they made in Brussels should be followed by other friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, as it will soon be one year since the Brussels conference, the Government intends to hold a meeting in Bissau, in late March, to review its results and assess the best follow-up mechanisms for its implementation. Therefore, the fulfilment of the pledges made is very important to us.

The engagement of our regional and subregional partners, friends and the entire international community has been very helpful to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau. That is why, in consultation with ECOWAS, the CPLP and the co-Chairs of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Government wishes to have the next meeting of the group take place here in New York at the end March. The engagement of ECOWAS — through its Chair, the President of Senegal, our neighbour, and its Special Envoy, former President of Nigeria, as well as the President of Guinea — on bringing Guineans to dialogue is very much appreciated.

We commend the work that the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) has been doing in Guinea-Bissau, and welcome the renewal of its mandate. We appeal to all other partners of Guinea-Bissau to provide the financial support needed for ECOMIB to continue the important mission of ensuring peace and security in the country.

We welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and hope that through the lessons learned from past mandates, the renewed mandate would bring new perspectives to better help Guinea-Bissau in its peacebuilding efforts. The Government of Guinea-Bissau supports the one-strong office of UNIOGBIS in Bissau, where all efforts and resources are centred on the purpose of helping peacebuilding efforts and bringing stability to the country.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the members of the Council and the entire international community for their continuous support to Guinea-Bissau.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

**Mrs. Mesquita-Borges** (Timor-Leste): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, for assuming the rotating presidency for this month. I also thank you for convening this meeting. I also want to thank Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the

Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, for his briefing to the Council and for his strenuous efforts to assist the Bissau-Guinean authorities to resolve the crisis.

I am honoured to address the Council on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), whose members are Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and my own country, Timor-Leste.

The CPLP member States regret the current political impasse and remain deeply concerned about the current situation in Guinea-Bissau. We call on all stakeholders — namely, the organs of sovereignty, the political parties, civil society and others — to engage in constructive, inclusive political dialogue, while respecting democratic principles and the Constitution. Statesmanship is required to move forward with both the national reform agenda and along the path to stability, which requires national leadership and ownership. In that connection, we highlight the fact that the constitutional order, as well as the role played by the judicial system, continue to be upheld in Guinea-Bissau. We also highlight the non-involvement of the armed forces. While it is the sole responsibility of the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to resolve the political crisis, it is crucial that the process fully respect the Constitution and the rule of law. The current impasse has impacted the reform agenda that has been initiated, in particular in the security and justice sectors, which have been stalled for over six months.

The national strategic development plan — entitled "Terra Ranka" — reflects the aspirations of the Bissau-Guineans for greater political stability and socioeconomic development, as well as for the consolidation of the rule of law and the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The document, presented by President José Mário Vaz and the former Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira at the donor round table in Brussels in March, garnered the support of the international partners. It is deeply concerning that the instability in the country has forced international partners to delay disbursements of pledges made in March. Such delays will only affect the people of Guinea-Bissau, who are already suffering a highly negative social and economic impact.

We call on the international community to continue supporting Guinea-Bissau and its people in the implementation of the State reforms and development plans, while stressing that the key responsibility for achieving the necessary stable environment for political and institutional cooperation rests with the national stakeholders. Last week, my country provided $250,000, as the first tranche of a pledge made during the Brussels round table, as part of an effort to support national reconciliation dialogue activities. Last July, Portugal also began the implementation of its strategic cooperation programme as follow-up to the €40 million pledge announced at the Brussels round table.

The CPLP wishes to recognize the concerted efforts of the international community to assist Guinea-Bissau in this crisis. In that regard, we appreciate and commend the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in particular those of Ambassador De Patriota as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC.

We also welcome the efforts made by regional leaders and by regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In particular, we thank ECOWAS for the important role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in maintaining peace and security in Guinea-Bissau. We also welcome the recent visit by the ECOWAS Special Envoy, His Excellency Mr. Obasanjo, and express appreciation for all his efforts. ECOMIB has played a critical role during this time of instability, and the CPLP expresses its full support for a possible extension of its mandate. We encourage donor countries and the Security Council to provide sufficient political and financial support for ECOMIB's work.

This indeed is a crucial moment for Guinea-Bissau. It is of the utmost importance that the international community stand by the country in consolidating the much-needed path to stability and development. The extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Bissau in its present format would definitely rightly express the United Nations commitment and engagement towards Guinea-Bissau and its people.

To conclude, we take this opportunity to highlight the recent visit made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste and current Chair of the Council of Ministers of the CPLP, His Excellency Mr. Hernâni Coelho, and the Executive Secretary of the CPLP, Ambassador Murargy, to Guinea-Bissau from 10 to 12 February. In that regard, we call for the early convening of the International Contact Group, in line with the call made by ECOWAS in December, in order to support the process of national dialogue towards

the consolidation of peace and democracy in Guinea-Bissau. We, the CPLP, remain ready to assist in the holding of the meeting in March, as just stated by the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

The CPLP stands ready, together with the rest of the international community, to continue our support to Guinea-Bissau in respect of national ownership.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.*